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OLC 71-1119

27 October 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group - 26 October 1971

1. On 26 October 1971, I attended a meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group at 0900 hours in the Situation Room in the White House. The meeting was chaired by General Al Haig and participants included: Clark MacGregor, Colonel Dick Kennedy, Eugene Cowen, Dick Cook, Tom Korologos, John Dean and Bill Timmons, of the White House staff; U. Alexis Johnson, David Abshire and Harry Symmes, of State Department; Arthur Gardiner of AID; General George Seignious, General Jim Lawrence, Stuart French and Colonel Frank Burdell, of Department of Defense.

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2. The first item of concern was the request from Senators Fulbright and Symington for [redacted] in the Pacific as a pre-condition to ratification of the Okinawa Treaty. A staff paper and supplemental "talking paper" for Under Secretary Johnson's use in replying to Senators Fulbright and Symington was approved.

3. The next item concerned amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act reported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and agreement was reached on the following points of possible concern to the Agency:

a. Both the Cooper-Church and Mansfield amendments should be strongly opposed, since they tie the President's hands on the eve of two crucial summit conferences. State will consult Senators Scott and Griffin regarding the best tactics for opposing these amendments and will provide material to them, plus Senators Smith and Tower for floor speeches attacking these amendments.

NSC review(s) completed.

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b. State will carry the ball in opposing the amendments limiting funds (Section 655) and personnel (Section 656) in Cambodia and is mindful of the CIA interest in this problem.

c. Defense will recommend deletion of provisions bringing authorizations for military assistance to Thailand, Laos and South Vietnam under the Foreign Relations Committee.

d. State will spearhead efforts to defeat or modify Section 513 which would require congressional authorization to finance military operations by foreign forces in Laos, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Burma. (The possible impact of these provisions on Agency operations, [REDACTED] recognized.)

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e. The requirement that the State Department keep the Foreign Relations Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee informed regarding all activities of U.S. agencies outside the United States (Section 405 (b)) was viewed with particular concern and the staff of the Armed Services Committee has undertaken to draft a revision limiting the application of this provision to matters within the jurisdiction of the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees.

4. In conclusion, General Haig made a particular plea that all present try to head off any legislation which would tend to tie the President's hands at this particular juncture. Mr. MacGregor noted that much of the problem arises from the desire of individual senators to "register a vote for peace" before the President himself can preempt this issue. He said that if we could head off some of these amendments until after November, we should be in fair shape.

5. It was agreed that we would reconvene at 0900 hours on Thursday, 28 October 1971, to resume our discussion of the amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act.

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Legislative Counsel

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